

# *Back to Basics:*

## *The Ins and Outs of Fine Dining*

### *Arrival and Seating:*

- ◆ *Always arrive on time. Never be tardy.*
- ◆ *The host is the first person to enter the room. They enter while escorting the lady guest of honor.*
- ◆ *The hostess is the last to enter the room, escorted by the male guest of honor.*
- ◆ *Never have more than one cocktail before dinner. It is impolite to be drunk at dinner.*
- ◆ *A gentleman always gets up from his chair when a woman gets up from hers or approaches the table.*
- ◆ *A gentleman pulls out the chair of the woman sitting to his right with both hands, and gives enough room for the woman to sit comfortably.*
- ◆ *Ladies hold the chair from the bottom with both hands to both help the gentleman move the chair, and to indicate when to stop.*
- ◆ *Men remain standing until all women are seated.*
- ◆ *The distance between your body and the edge of the table should be approximately the length of your hand. You should maintain good posture throughout the meal.*

## ***Beverages:***

- ◆ *Hosts are in charge of filling and maintaining their guests' glasses.*
- ◆ *Make sure the water glasses are no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.*
- ◆ *If the host is serving wine, the bottles of wine are to be kept at the table.*
- ◆ *Fill glasses that are half empty, but at no point is a glass to exceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.*
- ◆ *While pouring wine, do not pick up wine glasses. Pour when they are on the table.*

## ***While Eating:***

- ◆ *Do not cross your legs or feet at the dinner table. Sit with both feet flat on the floor. Do not put your elbows on the table, and be sure to sit upright at all times. Do not lean over your plate; bring your food to your mouth.*
- ◆ *Do not begin a meal until everyone at the table has been served theirs.*
- ◆ *Butter, bread, and salad are placed on the left.*
- ◆ *When you do not have a bread or butter plate, you place the bread on the upper left edge of your main plate.*
- ◆ *The cutlery that is furthest from the center of your plate is the cutlery you use first. For instance, if your meal begins with soup or salad, the soup spoon or salad fork will be furthest to the right or left of the plate. Following this, you work your way towards the*

*center. The dessert fork and spoon are generally found above the plate or served with dessert.*

- ◆ *All beverages, including water, tea, wine, milk etc are placed on the right, and removed from the right.*
- ◆ *Food, however, is served from the left, and is removed from the right (though this may change depending on customs and country).*
- ◆ *Do not salt the meal before you taste the food, as this is insulting to the hostess and chef.*
- ◆ *Do not drink while you have food in your mouth.*
- ◆ *If you have to leave the table during a meal due to an emergency, leave the napkin on your seat and not on the table, so that the servers understand that you will return.*
- ◆ *When conversing, give equal attention to the people both to your left and right, and be sure to avoid controversial topics such as politics and religion. Never shout at the table, and be sure to be respectful in tone and discussion.*
- ◆ *When eating something that has seeds or pits in it, it is acceptable to remove them with your forefinger and thumb. You may then place them on the edge of the plate. Don't ever use a toothpick at the table, and do not blow your nose in front of others. Use the restroom if necessary to do this.*
- ◆ *Be sure to hold your glass properly. Tumbler glasses are held near the bottom, stem glasses are held by the stem, and a goblet is held by the bottom of the bowl.*
- ◆ *Do not ask for more wine; wait until you are served more by the host. You may request more water, however.*

- ◆ *When eating bread, be sure to break one portion at a time. Use your thumb and index finger to hold, and butter the broken piece holding it over and close to the bread plate.*
- ◆ *When butter is passed, take a portion with the butter server. If there are little shells or pats of butter, use the pick of your fork to put them onto your butter/bread plate, then butter the bread with your own utensil.*
- ◆ *When you offer anything, such as bread, wine, food, be sure to offer to the person to your left first and then pass it to your right.*
- ◆ *When using bread to absorb and eat sauce on a plate, do not hold the bread with your fingers, spear the bread with your fork and absorb the sauce.*
- ◆ *When having soup, always scoop away from you, then bring the spoon to your mouth. Do not lean in, and do not slurp.*
- ◆ *The dessert can be eaten with either a fork or spoon, or both. This is also dependent on where the cutlery is located.*
- ◆ *Never place the fork and knife on the plate with the handles touching the table. Once you pick up the utensils they should not touch the table again.*
- ◆ *Always make sure you place your knife on the plate, with the sharp edge facing the center of the center.*
- ◆ *Avoid scraping utensils on the plate.*
- ◆ *Never point at anybody with your utensils when eating.*
- ◆ *When finished, do not push plate away from you; wait for it to be removed.*

- ◆ *After eating your main meal, wait for your base plate, known as a charger, to be removed before eating dessert. Dessert may be served with champagne.*

### ***Table Setting:***

- ◆ *Salad may be served as the first course, as a side dish with the main entrée, or as a separate course after the main entrée. So this will dictate where you find your salad fork and knife.*
- ◆ *Soup may be served in a soup plate, bowl, or cup.*
- ◆ *When fish is served accompanied with a slice of lemon. Spear the lemon with the fork, or cover the piece of lemon with your hand to avoid squirting or spraying lemon juice.*

### ***Napkins:***

- ◆ *Wait for the host/hostess to open their napkin before opening yours.*
- ◆ *Always dab your mouth with a napkin, never wipe. Unfold your napkin and place it on your lap. Never tuck your napkin into your shirt.*
- ◆ *Do not open your napkin by shaking it; open it discreetly under the table.*
- ◆ *Do not use your napkin as a handkerchief.*
- ◆ *When finishing your meal, place your napkin to the left of your plate. If your plate has been removed, place it on the table in front of you.*

### *Toasting:*

- ◆ *On special occasions, the host will make the toast to the honored guest. This can happen either before the meal, or during dessert.*
- ◆ *Toasting during dessert is primarily done for the honored guest on a special occasion, such as birthday, promotion, or farewell.*
- ◆ *The honored guest may lift their glass to eye level, but do not drink from it or stand.*
- ◆ *Following their toast, the honored guest is expected to toast the host and hostess, following all party members drink.*

### *Leaving:*

- ◆ *Be sure to sincerely thank your host/hostess before leaving.*

### *General Don'ts:*

- ◆ *Don't make a fuss. If you don't like something, leave it.*  
*Don't blow on hot food to cool it down. Wait for it to cool itself.*  
*Don't smoke at the table unless invited to by the hostess, and after making sure that it won't bother the other guests at the table.*  
*Don't treat the servers badly. It makes you look common.*  
*Don't eat chicken or chops with your fingers.*  
*Don't hold your fork while you drink your wine.*  
*Don't overstay your welcome.*

Resting Position American Style



Finish Position American Style



Resting Position Continental Style



Finish Position Continental Style

